GRANDMOTHER GRAY.

BY MARY K. BOUTELLE.

Faded and fair in her old arm-chair,
Sunset gilding her thin white hair,
Silently knitting sits Grandmother Gray;
While I on my elbows beside her lean,
And tell what wonderful things I mean
To have, and to do, if I can, some day;
You *can* talk so to Grandmother Gray—
She doesn't laugh, and send you away.

I see, as I look from the window seat,
A house there yonder, across the street,
With a fine French roof and a frescoed hall,
The deep bay-windows are full of flowers;
They've a clock of bronze that chimes the hours,
And a fountain—I hear it tinkle and fall
When the doors are open. "I mean," I say,
"To live in a house like that, some day."
"Money will buy it," says Grandmother Gray.

"There's a low barouche, all green and gold,
And a pair of horses as black as jet,
I've seen drive by—and before I'm old
A turn-out like that I hope to get.
How they prance and shine in their harness gay!
What fun 'twould be, if they ray away!"
"Money will buy them," says Grandmother Gray.

"To-morrow, I know, a great ship sails
Out of port, and across the sea;
Oh! to feel in my face the ocean gales,
And the salt waves dancing under me!
In the old, far lands of legend and lay
I long to roam—and I shall, some day."
"Money will do it," says Grandmother Gray.

"And when, like me, you are old," says she,
"And getting and going are done with, dear,
What then, do you think, will the one thing be
You will wish and need, to content you here?"
"Oh, when in my chair I have to stay,
Love, you see, will content me," I say.
"That, money won't buy," says Grandmother Gray.

"And, sure enough, if there's nothing worth
All your care, when the years are past,
But love in heaven, and love on earth,
Why not begin where you'll end at last?
Begin to lay up treasure, to-day,
Treasure that nothing can take away.
Bless the Lord!" says Grandmother Gray.

—*Wide Awake.*

A DEAD-LETTER ROMANCE.

BY WILLIAM E. CURTIS.

It was very long ago—as far back as 1835, if the old clerks in the New York Post office remember correctly—that she first began to come to the general delivery window—a modest, plainly clad lady, with a sweet, sober face, and a gentle manner. She was as regular as the moon, and like the moon came monthly, generally on the first Saturday of the month, and always found a letter awaiting her, folded in the same sort of an envelope; always addressed in the same cramped, angular hand to

MARIA H. RUSSELL,
NEW YORK POST-OFFICE.

It was always a "drop-letter," one of the many thousands that found their way through the little crevice in the wall daily, and no one ever knew who brought it; although, when the regularity of her visits began to attract attention, the unknown correspondent was carefully watched for about the first Friday of every month. But it was never known who brought that strange yellow envelope, nor did any one ever get a glimpse of its contents, although its outside was examined with curiosity a great many times. And the mysterious letter passed along like the thousands of daily messages of love and hate, of mortification and pleasure, of good cheer and evil bidding—the duns and remittances and promises to pay.

Years passed. The delivery clerks were changed one after another; some of them died; others were promoted; some went to other employment; but as each left he told the story of the strange woman to his successor as a part of the instructions of the office, and the new clerks soon became familiar with her visits as the months went by.

She was often questioned; inquisitive glances were often cast into her face, and several times she was followed by curious fellows; but no one ever discovered whence she came or whither she went.

One day a new clerk who had conceived a scheme to discover her identity told her he was not sure the letter belonged to her, as he knew other ladies in the city of the same name, and asked her if there was not some one in the neighborhood whom she could call to identify her.

"I am a stranger in this part of the city, sir," was her quiet, dignified reply, "but I have been here a good many times and never before was asked to prove my indentity. If it will be any satisfaction to you I will describe the appearance of the letter I expect—but wait; I am quite sure it will correspond with this one"—and she took from a little reticule she always carried the one she had received a month before.

A whole generation had passed away. Men and women had been born and buried, but still the queer letters came, and were called for by the queer woman. The clerks in the Post-office had heard of her from those who had preceded them, and her mysterious appearances had gained a romance with age, and strange stories that had been invented by the clerks long before were told of her as true.

Her face was smooth and round and placid when she first came, but it was getting wrinkled, and her hair was getting gray. One time, only once for twenty years, as nearly as could be remembered, she failed to come, and one, two, three letters were waiting for her in the pigeon-hole. The clerk did not advertise them nor send them to the Dead-letter Office with the rest, for he knew if Maria Russell was living she would come for them in time, and if he was dead nothing could be gained by hurrying them off to the great mail morgue where all unclaimed letters go. But after four months her familiar face appeared at the window again, and the clerk was as glad to see her as if she had been an old friend. But it was not the face he used to see. Its calm smoothness was shrunken, its fullness was wasted; there were deep-drawn lines around the mouth and eyes, and the fresh flush had turned to a wan paleness. A friendly greeting was on the tongue of the clerk as he turned to meet her, but when he saw how pale she was, how wasted, and how the calm expression of her face had been erased and covered with the autograph of pain, he suppressed the cordial words that were rushing his lips open, and simply remarked:

"'You have been sick?"

"'Yes, I have been sick," she said, still gathering her letters in her hand as she left the window, and, like a snowflake in the sea, melted away into the surging wave of humanity that was roaring in the street outside.

After this she came regularly again, but the paleness never left her face, and the wrinkles lengthened and deepened instead of growing less.

The clerks began to talk of her changed appearance, and concluded that she was suffering from some cause, they could not decide just what, although there were plenty of reasons suggested, and it was concluded at an informal meeting behind the wall of boxes in the post-office one day that the next time she came it was their duty to find out if she was needing any thing that they with their ill filled purses could supply. So when she came the clerk who happened to be at the window held her letter in his hand a moment to delay her, and said with a great deal of trepidation—for the mystery of her life and the distant self-possession of her manner discouraged any inquisitive attacks:

"I pray you to excuse me, madam; I thought that if you were in any sort of need—"

"I am very well cared for, thank you," she interrupted. "You have a letter for me, I see."

And she was gone again.

The clerk went back to his fellows, and, being a person of pride, related the incident, with some details that were not supplied in the occurrence. He said he had tendered the lady in their name, as delicately as possible, any aid that she might need, explaining to her that they had learned from long association to feel an interest in her, and hoped if she was in want of any of the necessaries of life, or if she needed assistance of any kind, that they would assist her to the extent of their abilities.

The clerks applauded the deftness with which their fellow had performed the duty, and inquired anxiously for her reply.

"She told me," he said, "that she was in good circumstances, and was not just now in want of any assistance, but, with our permission, she would remember our kind offer, and if ever in need would not hesitate to call upon us."

And if she had been a heroine formerly she became a goddess from that hour out—a goddess in an old-fashioned leghorn bonnet, a rusty broche shawl, and a reticule like the ones their grandmothers carried. But she was as divine to those habit-hardened post-office clerks as ever was St. Cecelia to the tone poets of the mediæval, or St. Agatha to the suffering women of the church. The gray hair of the goddess had grown much thinner, in the last few years, her eyes were sinking back under her temples and growing dim, and the hands that clasped the letter as each month came round were getting very gaunt and shriveled.

The war came on, the mails were laden down with messages of sorrow and bereavement; the clerks were hurried off as soldiers, and the widows and sisters of those whose places they went to fill came into the Post-office to do the public service; but the wan old woman came just the same as ever, and the yellow-wrapped letter was always waiting her there.

The war was over; the clerks who went out to fight came back limping and armless, to inquire after their mysterious friend. She was still coming, but soon after, in March, 1865, she was seen for the last time. The letter came as usual, one of the first days of April, but no one called for it. The clerk, who was a lady, then put it aside as if it was too good for its company and kept it near the window so that it would be ready when Maria Russell came. Another month went by, and another letter came, which was put away with its mate. Two more months and two more letters, and four of them were lying there in a pile waiting for the queer old woman—"the mysterious woman of the delivery window" they called her now—to come for them. How often those letters were examined. How closely the address and the seal were scanned, how they were held up to the light so that maybe a word of their contents might be discovered. What a temptation they were.

The chief of the delivery office ordered them advertised.

"No," said the clerks. "She will come for them. She knows they are here. She must be sick or something. She has come for them for thirty years, and they never have been advertised yet. Let them wait another month."

So they waited another month, two more, and still the queer old woman didn't come. And they had to be advertised. On a long list in the newspapers, near the bottom, under the head of "Ladies' Letters," were these words:

Russell, Maria H., 6.

People glanced at them—almost every body looks over the list of advertised letters to see if by some chance one belonging to them had strayed in among the vagabonds, and people remarked:

"I wonder who Maria H. Russell is; she has six letters advertised."

To the clerks in the post-office it seemed a shame that old Mrs. or Miss (perhaps she was an old maid) Russell's letters should be advertised, and stuck off into a dirty corner with a lot of soiled envelopes, and there was quite an indignation meeting held over the matter. But still the queer old woman did not come.

"Perhaps she is dead," they said, "poor thing. Perhaps she is dead."

But if there were whispers of displeasure when the letters were advertised, there was a storm of wrath when the clerk announced that they must be sent to the Dead-letter Office. The Postmaster was appealed to. He was a man of business, and didn't care much for romance, so he said the letters must go, and the rules of the department carried out, and that the seventh letter which had come in since the six were advertised must go with them.

But through all the sorrow there was gleaming the sunshine of relief. At the Dead-letter Office it would be found out what these mysterious envelopes contained. And the lady who made up the packages for the Dead-letter Office pinned this note to Maria Russell's seven letters:

These are very peculiar letters. They belong to a woman who has been coming to the post-office regularly every month for thirty years; but she has ceased to come, and we think she is dead. Whoever opens these letters will confer a great favor by informing the clerks of the New York Post-office of their contents, as we have a great curiosity to know who Maria Russell is, or was, and something about the person who has been sending her these letters regularly for so long.

This note was submitted to a conventionof clerks and declared unanimously to be the proper thing. A reply was awaited anxiously. Before it came two more letters had followed their fellows in, and were waiting for Maria Russell; but she never came to get them, and they were sent off like the rest to have their secrets revealed in the great morgue at Washington.

Finally there came an envelope addressed to "the clerks of the New York Post-office," and it was opened by the first person in that category into whose hands it came. That person read the inclosure hurriedly through, and called a convention, to which he read the following:

Although it is directly against the rules of the office, I take the responsibility of gratifying your curiosity. Nine letters addressed to Maria H. Russell have come to my hands. Each one contained a brief note, calling attention to an inclosure, without date or signature. Each inclosure was a five-dollar bill. We have a great deal of curiosity ourselves here to learn something about this strange matter. Won't some of you write us what you know? And if any further disclosures are made we will inform you.

Here was a romance indeed. Nine unsigned letters, each with a similar inclosure of money. Was it possible, they thought, that for thirty years these same sort of letters, with the same inclosures, had been coming to Maria Russell. And why didn't they stop, if she was dead, as she certainly must be. The whole post office was excited and perplexed in its efforts to find a solution of this mystery. But there was no clew to Mrs. or Miss Russell; no clew to her mysterious correspondent. I can not repeat the many theories that were advanced, or the many speculations that were put out to explain the matter; but each was a different one, and each had as good ground for believing his the true one as any other, because none of them had any ground at all. To add to the mystery, some one brought in a daily paper which contained the following advertisement:

PERSONAL—ANY PERSON HAVING ANY knowledge of the whereabouts of Maria H. Russell, who has been a resident of this city for thirty years, will relieve a terrible anxiety by communicating with C. B. R., Post-office.

What a sensation that personal made in the Post-office Department. Here at last was a clew to the unknown correspondent who was wondering why he had received no acknowledgement to his letters for nine months; and to add to the excitement another letter, in the same pale-yellow style of envelope, addressed in the same similar chirography, was tossed with hundreds of others to the distributor's table, where it came to light. Fifty letters were addressed to "C. B. R.," each of which stated that they had important information concerning Maria H. Russell; but before many of them were mailed it leaked out that the personal was put in the papers by one of the clerks, who hoped to reach in advance of his fellows a clew to the mystery. But nothing satisfactory resulted even from the personal. Several Maria Russell's turned up to answer it, and were very much disgusted to find they weren't the person wanted; but it brought no clew to the curious old lady and her curious correspondent.

Four, five, six years went by, and each month brought as regularly as the month came round a letter for Maria H. Russell. The reverence with which these letters were treated was a new feature in the Post-office Department. It was a satisfaction even to handle them, and feel of the thin, limpsy enclosure, and with what agony of interest they were advertised, and finally sent away to the Dead-letter Office each thirty days to be deposited with the others just like them that had gone before.

One day nearly two years ago a clerk in the post-office told a friend who was connected with a newspaper of the circumstances, and a brief statement of facts was published. The paragraph was widely quoted—republished in almost every paper in the United States. And with this publication the letters stopped coming. The last one was postmarked March 4, 1875. It is thought that the mysterious correspondent saw the paragraph, and knew in that way that Maria Russell was dead—for she must be dead, or she would have called for her letters in the years that had gone since she got the last.

But it may be asked why the unknown correspondent doesn't send to the Dead-letter Office and claim his money—the money he sent so faithfully each month to Maria Russell, even for ten years after she was dead and gone. A large number of claims have been made for the money since the publication last year, and a variety of singular stories have been told to account for the manner in which the correspondence was conducted.

One man wrote to inform the Post-office Department that he was the person who had been sending the money to Maria Russell these forty years agone, but as his manuscript was in every way dissimilar from that in the original letters he was at once pronounced an impostor.

A man in Sturgis, Mich., has told the strangest story and put in the strongest claim. He says that he is one of a family of five children, four brothers and one daughter. In 1835 his father and mother separated, the father taking the boys and the mother the girl, and the father agreeing to pay $5 a month for his daughter's support as long as he lived, but to have no communication with her in any way whatever. He says, this man in Michigan, that his father used to send the money in the manner described as long as he lived with him, but having some differences about 1846 they, the father and son, separated, the latter going West, where he has resided ever since, without having heard once from the rest of his family. He said he was in no need of the money, but would like very much to know if the strange correspondents were his father and sister. He would identify the writing, he thought, if they would send him one of the letters.

Mr. Russell's letter was strongly indorsed by several prominent residents of Sturgis, who bore testimony to his good character and general worthiness.

Mr. Dallas, the Superintendent of the Dead-letter Office, replied that while he greatly desired to oblige Mr. Russell, it was not permitted to send any of the letters out of the office; but if Mr. Russell was ever in Washington he would be glad to give him any information in his power, and show him any papers in the department relating to the case. The law required that these letters and their contents be reclaimed within three years. At the end of which time the money inclosures revert to the United States Treasury, from which they can not be recovered without a special act of Congress.

On a recent visit to the Dead-letter Office I saw the silent, inanimate relics of this strange mystery. A pile of plain, yellow envelopes, marked with some hieroglyphics peculiar to the Dead-letter men, indicating their reference to the books of the bureau. If they could talk what a strange story they might tell. What a theme for a romance are these dead letters—dead in every respect. Forlorn, too, the speechless wanderers, with neither their writer nor their intended recipient to claim them. I opened one of them—there was no date, no signature, and written in the center of the page of blue note paper, with pale ink, in an old-fashioned hand that appeared to have been uncertain with age, were those few unsuggestive words:

"I enclose you the money as usual. I will send more the first of next month. You need not write."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

ITS TIME TO GO TO BED.

'Tis strange how pa does act sometimes
When I have got a beau;
He seems to think it just the time
Authority to show.
He never thinks himself once young,
But thinks me old instead;
Then raps on the floor and shouts,
"It's time to go to bed."

Now all was silent when at last,
His saddened heart to cheer,
I said you must not mind papa,
He's getting old and queer.
He sat as still as any post,
And not a word was said;
When lo, another rap and shout—
"It's time to go to bed."

Said poor George—"May, I now must go,
And let folks go to bed;
He's knocked upon the floor now twice,
He'll next knock on my head."
"But you must come again, dear George,
Remember, pa is old;
If he was young like you and I
I'm sure he would not scold."

But poor George never came again,
The knocking scared him out;
And always when I've got a beau
Pa's got to bang and shout.
But I have got another now,
And Johnny is his name;
'Tis true papa yet bangs and shouts,
But Johnny he is game.

"I think your papa has retired"—
It was no sooner said,
When instantly the rap and shout—
"It's time to go to bed."
I quickly bade dear John good-night,
Up to my room did go,
And what happened quite soon after
You very soon shall know.

I crept quite silent down the stairs,
While John outside did wait;
I threw my shawl about myself,
And joined him at the gate.
Hours at the gate passed pleasantly
Between dear John and I,
I could not now enumerate,
No, not if I should try.

Pa says dear John has common sense
In not staying so late;
But knows not half the sparking done
By us down at the gate.
Dear papa no more raps and shouts
For us to go to bed;
There isn't so much sitting up
Since John and I were wed.

—*Poughkeepsie Press.*

The Careful Man.

Soon after noon yesterday a stranger entered a Woodward Avenue hardware store and asked if they kept shingle-nails there. Being informed that they had a dozen kegs on hand, he further inquired:

"Are they genuine shingle-nails, or only imitations?"

"They are shingle-nails, of course."

"Let me see them."

A handful was placed on the counter before him, and he took several nails to the door where he could get a stronger light. After scanning them thoroughly he tested two or three between his fingers, and said:

"Well, they seem to be all right, and I'll take five pounds. I don't want to appear captious, but I bought some shingle-nails along here somewhere about a month ago, carried them home, and what do you suppose they turned out to be?"

"Six-penny?" answered the clerk.

"No, sir. They were shoe-pegs, sir!"

"That was strange," mused the clerk.

"And another time when I ordered shingle-nails," continued the stranger, "the clerk put up four stove-handles, three nutmeg-graters and a coffee-mill. Can I build a cow-shed out of coffee-mills? Can I shingle a barn with stove-handles? Can I clap-board a smoke-house with nutmeg-graters?"

"Curious mistake, that," said the clerk.

"And another time, when I asked for shingle-nails, they put up four corn-poppers and a match-safe. These things have sunk deep into my soul, and you mustn't blame me for seeming particular. Now, these are nails, are they?"

"Of course."

"Shingle-nails?"

"Yes, sir."

"Just write it on this card and give me your name, the name of the firm, the number of this store and the date of the month. I don't want to make trouble, but if I find when I get home that you have put me up bath-brick and harness-snaps in the place of shingle-nails, I'll come back here and make it warm for you!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

—A Dubuque girl played copenhagen at a party the other night, and yelled and shrieked and howled and ran behind the door and scratched the young man's face in seven places, and upset a kerosene lamp, and kicked over the piano-stool, and screamed for the police, and finally, when he kissed her just on the tip of the ear, she fainted dead away, and said she could never look any one in the face again, and they led the bashful, modest creature sobbing home. The next day she ran away with a married lightning-rod peddler with a hare lip and six children.—*Burlington Hawk-eye.*

A RELIC OF THE PAST.

Death of a Tennessee Negro Who Had Turned the First Quarter of the Second Century of His Existence—His Recollection of the Revolutionary War.

[From the Memphis Avalanche.]

There died near Rossville, Tenn., a few days ago, a venerable and remarkable old negro—perhaps one of the oldest in the land—a man who has seen generation after generation come upon the stage of life, act its part, and pass off into oblivion. He has seen his friends born, ripened into manhood, and gone down in old age to the grave. Children of three generations have clustered around his knees and heard his recital of the legends of a past century, and have, one after the other, been laid to rest in a grave over which his tears have fallen. Yet, like the "Wandering Jew" of Sue's great fiction, he had been forced to "go on" until the Creator that gave him life should see fit to take back the gift. "Uncle Jake" Pulliam has for many years been living in the county where he died, having before the war been a slave of the Pulliam family. "Uncle Jake" claimed to be 156 years old, and was probably, judging from his age at the time various scenes were enacted, not less than 125 years old.

To men of this generation there is something weird and almost incomprehensible in the existence, but a few weeks ago, of one who was a man grown at the time of the birth of the republic. The old man's stories of the stormy events of the Revolution were singularly fresh and accurate, and showed that he had acted his part in those great and perilous scenes which attended the ushering into existence of the best government the world has ever seen. The history of this old patriarch's life, as he has told it over and over again beside the pine-knot fire before his cabin door, contains so much that is marvelous that it should not be withheld from the public.

Uncle Jake's earliest memories take him back to a confused mingling of a savage crowd—a sea voyage, and the crowding of new sensations of a strange people and a strange land. From all of which Uncle Jake thought that he was brought to this country when he was about ten years old. He never knew a mother or a father. His first home was among the rice fields of the Carolinas, where he was for several years (he don't know how many) employed "'round de house." When about 17 years old he was sold to the Du Pont family, of Huguenot extraction, and was the body servant of the "young mass'r," Henry Du Pont. When the Revolution began, in 1775, his young master enlisted as an ensign under Moultrie in the Continental army, and he 'accompanied him. The old man says he was then "jes about grone and didn't had no har on my chin." He remembers clearly his first engagement with the red coats; it was when Col. Moultrie sent his young master with their Captain Marion, to take Fort Johnson. When the fort was taken, he himself rammed the ball in one of the old cannon that were turned against the British fleet. Uncle Jake tells some marvelous tales of his own personal daring upon that and similar occasions. One ludicrous incident of how "de sojers laffed" when, a ball striking the sand bags of the fort, he was covered up to the chin and lay yelling for help, thinking that the rest of his anatomy had been carried off by the shot.

At the assault on Savannah by the combined forces of the French and Americans, his young master fell by the side of the gallant Pole, Count Pulaski. The old man's voice would grow husky as he spoke of the burial by torchlight on the margin of the marsh, and how Captain Marion kindly patted his shoulder as he lay sobbing on the ground, and said: "Never mind, Jake. He fell like a brave man, and you can tell his father so."

After that he attached himself to Marion, and was, after the return of the command to Carolina, presented to Marion by his old master for his use until the close of the war. Uncle Jake could tell many incidents of the siege of Charleston; how Marion's leg was broken there, and how he helped to bandage up the shatttered limb. He was with the "Swamp Fox" in all his battles and brushes with Tarleton and his tories, being once captured by that bold rider, but afterwards escaped, carrying off Tarleton's own pack mule with his private baggage. He followed Marion through the swamps of the Pedee and Santee Rivers, was present when three "Britishers" were swung up to one limb, by way of retaliation for the hanging of three of Marion's men. He describes Marion as a small man, whom he feared, and yet loved devotedly. But strangest of all is the narrative Uncle Jake gives of an incident which is familiar to every school boy—the instance of the visit of the English officer to Marion at Snow Island, and how Marion gave him a dining on potatoes. Uncle Jake affirms that his hands put "dem taters in de ashes, and took dem out on a sharp stick, and put dem on de log between de General and de officer." After the war, Jake returned to the old homestead. The "ole mass'r" had gone down in sorrow to the grave, to be followed soon by "ole missis." The plantation was sold and the slaves scattered among various owners. Jake fell to the lot of a cousin of the Du Ponts, who lived in the rice country of South Carolina. Here his children and grandchildren grew around him.

When he was, he says, about sixty years old, he went down the river to Savannah, "Pulling de six ode bote" used on such occasions. There every body was on the streets cheering and yelling as an old man richly dressed drove by slowly in a carriage bowing to the crowd. From the date all this must have been when Lafayette made his tour of triumph through the land in 1825. Besides, Uncle Jake said he was "a Frencher," though he "disremembered" the name.

Soon after this Uncle Jake came out to Mississippi with a new master, taking many weeks to make the journey, In that State he lived for a few years, and then was brought up into Tennessee, where he has since lived. The old man's account of his first sight of a locomotive, a steamboat, and the triumphant products of the march of civilization, was replete with interest.

Up to the last his faculties were wonderfully clear. Last year he even made a small crop of corn and cotton.

On Thursday this man, who measured his life by decades, not by years, ended his long and eventful career. Death, so long in coming, finally touched his old limbs, and its icy hand crept to his heart-strings, and cut the thread of life asunder. Old Jake, who so long has listened to the "angel voices calling," answering back "I'm coming," has at length been gathered to his loved ones to reap the reward of a life of usefulness. *Requiescat in pace.*

The Cause of the 'Splosion.

"I would invite you to my house, brudder Jackson," said Deacon Johnson, as he emerged from church last Sunday evening, "but I dunno as we'll get any supper dis night, the cook-stove am so dreffully out ob repair."

"What's de matter wid de stove?"

"Why, you see cold wedder am comin' on and wood's gettin' skese an' high, an' I've 'structed de folks to be berry eknocomical in de usin' ob it. Wes'e bin buyin' in small lots, an' last night bein' out ob fuel I sent one of my boys ober to a neighbor's to borrow a few sticks. De man or his family had gone to bed owin to de lateness ob de hour, an' dat boy, who would 'spise to do a unhonest transaction, wrote out his note for de value ob de wood, an' droppin' it in a prominent place in de woodshed, shouldered an armful an' brought it home."

"Jess so."

"Well, a fire was kindled, de teakittle put on, de ole woman she is gittin de supper. All ob a sudden, puff went de stove, zoom; ke swish, kusiush went something, and as I tumbled over I saw de ole woman makin for de roof wid de teakittle and the stove-plates followin' her, while de boys an de gals was as brack wid smut as de ace ob spades. De stove's goose was cooked for a fact."

"What was de cause ob de splosshun?"

"I'm strongly 'clined to believe dat dar was powder in dat wood, an' dat de powder was done put in dar by dat white man to ketch some thievin' darkies wat nebber buys no wood, an' bressed ef I don't think dat man spects me, kase he couldn't find dat note, and won't make any 'pologies."

"Dat am an outrage."

"For a fact, an' de chillen's supper was spiled, too."—*Keokuk Constitution.*

California Raisins.

We were shown yesterday a specimen of layer raisins, with a bunch of fresh grapes alongside of them from which these raisins were made. They were as handsome as any Malaga raisins we have seen in years. The fresh grapes are known as Muscatel, a variety, we take it, distinct from the Muscat of Alexandria. The former, we are told, are the best variety for raisin making, and will hereafter be cultivated extensively in this State. The specimen of raisins shown us represented about four thousand boxes, produced from about twenty acres of grapes. These raisins will bring the producer in this market about $2 a box, or about $8,000 in all. They will bring at retail prices $2.50 a box. Now, in what way can twenty acres be made to produce more than in this instance? Of course there are the expenses of curing, boxes and several small items. But these expenses could not have been much, if any, greater than would have been required if the land had been sown in wheat. There would have been the plowing, seeding, cost of seed, reaping, threshing, cost of sacks, and so on. These items would have been equal to one cent a pound on the wheat produced, and the whole amount of wheat would not have much exceeded four hundred bushels, which would have brought less than two cents a pound in this market, or an aggregate of less than $800 against an aggregate of $8,000 on the raisin crop.—*San Francisco Bulletin, Oct.* 17.

—Prince Gortchakoff, the Russian premier, is noted for his abstemious habits. He never drinks a cup of wine and never smokes. He drinks a cup of coffee in bed before rising, and eats but two meals a day. Retiring very early in the evening, he sleeps ten or twelve hours. His regular habits have kept his frame in such excellent condition that he does not feel the infirmities of old age at all. He was born in 1798, entered upon his diplomatic career under Count Nesselrode, and became the Foreign Minister of Russia at the close of the Crimean campaign.

—At Paradise, Cache County, Utah, a little son of Wm. Mitten, aged seven years, went with his sister to a shingle-mill. He told his sister that he would tie a string around the coming shaft and "see what it would do." Suiting the action to the word, he tied the string to the shaft, and the result was the little fellow's arm was drawn from the socket and broken in three places; his legs were both pulled off below the knees, and his head, stomach and side were fearfully mangled and bruised. He lived about two hours after the accident occurred.

The Welfare of the Human System

Is in a great measure dependent upon the way in which the bowels perform their evacuative function. If they are regular—and they can always be rendered so by the use of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters—an important essential of health is secured, and that blessing is very apt to follow. If they are irregular, chronic constipation and indigestion supervene, the liver becomes disordered, and the bile, being diverted from its natural channel and purposes, enters and contaminates the blood, producing that yellowish cast of the skin and whites of the eyes which is such a sure index of biliousness. All these disastrous consequences, as well as others of a far more serious nature, are remedied and prevented by Hostetter's Bitters, the leading American specific for disorders of the bowels, stomach and liver.

COLLINS' VOLTAIC PLASTER is a gentle and constant Electric Battery closely and continuously applied to the skin by the adhesion of the Plaster and is capable at all times of affording the most grateful relief in Rheumatism, Neuralgia and Sciatica.